



THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SENTINEL

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

VOLUME 9, ISSUE 7 • JULY 2018



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Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG)

Thank You From the Tali-Banned Cigar Aficionado Club

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Still MIA 47 Years Later

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The Many Roads to My Career in Law Enforcement

BOOK REVIEW — *RELENTLESS STRIKE: The Secret History
of Joint Special Operations Command* by Sean Naylor



SENTINEL

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IN THIS ISSUE:

President's Page	1
The Buon Enao Project — The Creation of the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG)	2
Thank You From the Tali-Banned Cigar Aficionado Club	5
Newman Returns to Laos 4th Time for RT Intruder: Still MIA 47 Years Later	6
Col Stephen Edward Cavanaugh Jr., Chief, MACV-SOG, Dies at 96	9
The Many Roads to My Career in Law Enforcement	10
BOOK REVIEW — <i>RELENTLESS STRIKE: The Secret History of Joint Special Operations Command</i> by Sean Naylor	12
Letters to the Editor	13
SFA Chapter 78 June 2018 Meeting	14

COVER: Cliff Newman in 2015 on a hilltop near the Vietnam/Laotian border while working with DPAA recovery specialists to find the remains of RT Intruder members and the four 101st Airborne aviators who died in a horrific crash in 1971 while attempting to lift out team members while under intense, deadly enemy fire. (Photo Courtesy of Cliff Newman)



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From the Editor



Lonny Holmes
Sentinel Editor

Green Beret MACV-SOG Recon Team Idaho 1-0 John Meyer, now Chapter 78 President pens a story in this issue of the *Sentinel* of the "saga" of RT Intruder and Special Forces Association Executive Director Cliff Newman. Cliff was a member of the Brightlight recovery Recon Team Habu and has been returning to Laos to assist in the recovery of the SF Recon Team Intruder remains. To put this story together John Meyer interviewed Cliff and Billy Waugh as well as surviving member Sammy Hernandez. Stories like this are a very important part of our history in Vietnam and America's dedication to recover the remains of our soldiers lost in battle.

As editor of the *Sentinel* for more than seven years I would like to thank all our contributing writers and our graphic designer Debra Holm. Without the frequent stories provided by Chapter 78, other SFA and SOA members and both Army Air Cav and U.S. Air Force, the *Sentinel* would not have been able to grow into "nearly a magazine" produced by and for our Green Beret readership. Thus with all your support our 'newsletter' has again received notice from the SFA, this year a special *Crossed Arrows Award for Excellence*. Again, I thank all who helped produce the *Sentinel*. ❖

Lonny Holmes
Sentinel Editor



Chapter 78 President John Stryker Meyer attended the SFA International Convention held in El Paso, Texas, June 12-16. From left: SFA President Gary Koenitzer, former A/5/19 CO and convention speaker Mitch Utterbach, John Meyer and A/5/19 SGM Eylicio.



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MISSION STATEMENT: The *Sentinel* will provide interesting and meaningful information relative to the Special Forces experience — today, yesterday and tomorrow. Articles will be published that were written by knowledgeable authors who will provide objective and accurate accounts of real world experiences.

The *Sentinel* is published monthly by Special Forces Association Chapter 78, Southern California. The views, opinions and articles printed in this issue do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Army or the United States Special Operations Command, the Special Forces Association, or Special Forces Association Chapter 78. Please address any comments to the editor, "*Sentinel*" to dhgraphics@earthlink.net.

The President's Page | July 2018



John Stryker Meyer
President SFA 78

Gentlemen of Chapter 78,

I want to thank the chapter for sponsoring my trip to El Paso to celebrate another SF Reunion. Without missing a blink, I have to commend Reunion Chapter Sponsor Chapter 9 President Pete Peral, Chairman of the Reunion Committee Brian Kanof, and all of the officers who were present and actively participating in running a smooth event every day and night: VP Steve Franzoni, Secretary Bill Snider, Treasurer Tom Melgares and a

huge group of volunteers and chapter members. Chapter 9 has set the bar very high for future reunions. A tip of the beret to Chap. 9. For me personally, as I was exiting the El Paso Airport on day one, Chap. 9 members greeted us, including SF Living Legend Issac Camacho. Over the years, SF Legend Billy Waugh had regaled me with many stories about Issac, it was an honor to meet him finally.

The official theme for the reunion was "Honoring The Mexican-American Green Beret" and the banquet on Saturday night paid homage to that rich heritage. That history was impressive and well presented, up to and including the excellent 80-page, high-quality program that was distributed through the week.

However, the official concern of Special Forces command was again echoed, as it was throughout the reunion: Special Forces recruitment is hurt'n for certain and everyone put out that message, from Pete Peral, duly reelected SFA BOD President Gary Koenitzer and many other guest speakers. The bottom line is one we've heard before: SF command is looking for more qualified recruits at a time when the Op/Tempos continue relentlessly while an increasing proportion of America's youth are incapable of passing rudimentary school physical education classes, let alone the rigorous demands of prospective candidates in the Pre-Qua and actual selection process.

Additionally, the pipeline from day one when a recruit begins taking classes in Phase One at Special Force Training Group, until final graduation where the command—Don Berets!—can run as long as two years. There is an official SF Recruitment unit, but there are less than two dozen people filling critical posts across the country.

The gauntlet was thrown down to every chapter in the SFA: Go forth into the world, actively look for good recruits, those involved in ROTC and JROTC are encouraged to heighten their review of mentally and physically fit students for candidates, and to help spread the word on the unique opportunity Special Forces offers individuals to serve their country.

Last, but not least, chapters were asked to host recruitment events to include having the SOCOM Black Daggers parachute into it and meet potential candidates. I have a few ideas, Chapter 78 officers

are discussing ideas too. So let's put our collective heads together for an event to help the SF recruitment effort. Airborne!

See you at the next Chap. 78 meeting. Details below:

Date & Time: July 14, 8:30 a.m. Breakfast will be served.

Location: Embassy Suites

3100 East Frontera

(The SE Corner of Hwy 91 & Glassell St.)

The Spanish Moss Room

Anaheim, CA 92807

CRITICAL REMINDER:

Please contact Chapter Vice President Brad Welker or me to confirm your attendance. We need an accurate headcount. ❖

John Stryker Meyer

President, SFA Chapter 78



This is one of the trails cut by local people assisting DPAA and Newman in getting to the area where the helicopter crashes in 1971—story on page 6. (Photo Credit) Cliff Newman

THE FORGOTTEN WARRIORS



Updates on the Montagnards



Michael D. Bengé

The Buon Enao Project - The Creation of the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG)

By Michael D. Bengé

David A. Nuttle arrived in Vietnam in late 1959, with the International Voluntary Service (IVS), a non-government organization

that was the precursor of the US Peace Corps and on contract to USAID. Nuttle was raised on a livestock farm in Kansas, gained a college degree in agriculture, and was assigned by IVS to the Ea Kmat agricultural experimental station near Ban Me Thuot, Darlac Province to “provide agricultural and community services.” Darlac was among the country’s largest provinces, and at that time, the government estimated its population at 90,000 Montagnards, mainly Rhade with some Mnong, and 50,750 Vietnamese. Many of the Vietnamese were newly resettled from the coastal provinces of South Vietnam as well as refugees from North Vietnam including two villages of Nung and one of Tai Dam, tribal people who fled the northern communists in 1954. By 1961, there were 17 Vietnamese resettlement centers (i.e., Land Development Centers) in Darlac province, and two for the Highlanders from North Vietnam (i.e., Nung and Tai Dam). There were plans for the establishment of ten more for Vietnamese in 1962.

Part of Nuttle’s job at Ea Kmat was outreach, to find out the Rhade’s agricultural needs, and to see if what the agricultural experiment station was doing would fit their needs. To do so, Nuttle purchased a BMW motorcycle and spent much of his time in their villages throughout the province. By doing so, he forged particularly close relationships with the Rhade, gained respect for their culture and customs, became proficient in their language, and conducted an ethnological study which he had passed on to American officials in Embassy circles.

In discussion with Rhade leaders, they expressed their concern for his safety and warned him of the deteriorating security situation. They explained to him that the communists were gaining ever-

increasing influence with their people; the reasons being because of the Highlanders very difficult relations with the Saigon government, the Rhade’s inability to defend themselves, and the collateral damage from ARVN’s military operations. In general, they were caught between a rock and a hard place and feared and suffered from both adversaries. They asked Nuttle if he could somehow get the government and ARVN off their backs as they felt they did as much damage to their villages as the VC; except for the terroristic tactics of the latter such as executing village leaders, school teachers, health workers and others who might have association with the GVN (Government of South Vietnam). They also asked for the government to “provide some social and political benefits.” Lastly, and most important, they would expect a self-defense force to be issued with modern firearms.

Nuttle concluded that unless things drastically changed, the Rhade would not fight for South Vietnam; however, he believed that they would “fight to defend family, home and village” and by doing so would “indirectly support” the South Vietnamese government “by resisting VC control, taxation and conscription of young men.”

On occasion, Nuttle went to Saigon for R&R (both professional and social reasons). In February 1961, he began seeing Bonnie Layton, the young daughter of Colonel Gilbert Layton of the CIA’s Military Operations Section. Nuttle and Gil Layton got on well, and had a series of after-dinner discussions regarding the increasing presence of the Vietcong in Darlac province; the ineffectiveness of the Vietnamese government to deal with the security situation; and the fact that the unarmed Montagnards, caught between the VC and the GVN, were suffering greatly as a result. Furthermore, the security of the entire Highlands was in danger. Nuttle and Layton agreed that under the present circumstances, the Montagnards would not fight for the South Vietnamese government since the Montagnards had no concept of nation or national defense. They further agreed that the Rhade and other Highlanders would more than likely fight for their family, home and village if they were trained and armed, if the government and ARVN would stay off their backs, and if the government provided some social and political benefits. Their discussions gave birth to the Buon Enao experiment.

All programs that affected the Vietnamese and were advised and supported by the U.S. Mission were supposed to be accomplished in concert with the Vietnamese government. In the case of the Montagnard programs however, it was agreed that the projects would at first be carried out separately instead of coming under the command and control of the Vietnamese Army and its advisers – the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) which was absorbed by the U.S. Military Assistance Command, Viet Nam (MACV) in early 1962. There was no assurance that the experiment with the Rhade and other tribespeople would work, especially considering the Vietnam government's failure to follow through on other promises to the Montagnards.

On 5 May 1961, Layton raised the Highlander question with William Colby, the CIA station chief in Saigon, suggesting that the government arm up to 1,000 tribesmen. In response Colby put up a paper to his Country Team colleagues on 25 May. He then followed up by discussing the concept with Vietnam's President Ngô Đình Diệm and his powerful brother, confidant and close advisor Ngô Đình Nhu, who was now playing a major role in organizing the government's counter-insurgency effort. At some point Colby and Nhu visited Darlac together and Colby emphasized the need to win the Rhade to the anti-Communist side. To deal with any concerns he might have about the CIA's arming Highlanders, Colby suggested to Nhu that the government's Presidential Survey Office (PSO) should have a direct involvement in any such project. Nhu had a high degree of personal control of the PSO, his personal enforcers, the nearest thing South Viet Nam had to the CIA, as well as over the South Vietnamese Special Forces—LLDB (Lực Lượng Đặc Biệt). Nevertheless, Nhu and several other high-ranking Vietnamese officials harbored great fear of arming the Montagnards.

Past experience had given Colby reason to doubt the general standard of efficiency of the LLDB, whose officers were picked more for personal loyalty to Nhu and Diem than for military skill. But Colby apparently believed the LLDB's involvement would reassure Diem that Nhu could maintain control of whatever program evolved. Once they had been won over, certainly there would be no difficulty with Colonel Le Quang Tung, the commanding officer of the PSO and the LLDB, nor with Major Nguyen Van Bang, the Province Chief in Darlac.

Thus, Nuttle was told by Colby and Gil that they wanted him "to go forth and help the military create a pilot model of a Montagnard defended village." Nuttle agreed to this. The following day (4 October) while still in Saigon, he submitted his resignation from IVS, an organization he did not want to involve in a warlike project. Nuttle's IVS superiors, having been briefed in advance by the CIA, were expecting his resignation. Nuttle signed a contract with the CIA later the same day. Also recruited and sent to work with Nuttle was US Special Forces' Sergeant First Class Paul Campbell, a medic; the decision raised no objection from anyone.

Nuttle had drawn up a short-list of the grievances against the regime: first and foremost – the Rhade asked Nuttle "to get the government off their backs"; second – they (and other Highlanders) felt "abandoned by the government" and so had been "driven to come to terms with the VC organization in the province"; third – that all

attacks on Rhade villages by government forces, even if these villages were perceived to be co-operating with the Communists, must cease; fourth – those "who had been conscripted and forced to train with or support the VC would be given an amnesty upon declaring their allegiance" to the government; and finally – the government would guarantee them medical, educational and agricultural assistance. If the government accepted these conditions they would agree that Buon Enao could act as the test village. The only caveat the authorities introduced at this stage was that, "any Rhade who had co-operated with the VC in any way was to be identified, re-educated to the government cause, and carefully observed. Amnesty would not be granted immediately."

In late October 1961, the Rhade village of Buon Enao, with a population of around 400 Rhade tribespeople and located near the capitol city of Ban Me Thuot in Darlac Province, was visited by Nuttle as a representative of the U.S. Embassy (CIA), accompanied by Sergeant Campbell the Special Forces medic. They approached tribal leaders with a proposition offering weapons and training if they would declare allegiance to the South Vietnamese government and participate in a village self-defense program. They pledged allegiance and the villagers agreed to take certain steps to show their support for the government and their willingness to co-operate by building a fence to enclose Buon Enao as protection and as a visible sign to others that they had chosen to participate in the new program; digging shelters within the village where women and children could take refuge in case of an attack; constructing housing for a training center and for a dispensary to handle the promised medical aid; and establishing an intelligence system to control movement into the village and provide early warning in case of attack. The village elders of Buon Enao and the South Vietnamese government verbally agreed to these terms in the first part of November. In the second week of December when these tasks had been completed, the Buon Enao villagers, armed with crossbows and spears, publicly pledged that no Viet Cong would enter their village or receive assistance of any kind. A trail-watch system was established to warn of approaching Communist forces. Eventually, a second concentric fence was erected with embedded punji stakes between.

Buon Enao was a beacon of hope. After the first Village Defender and Strike Force personnel had completed their training, in accor-

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dance with the Buon Enao project, some 39 neighboring villages elected to join the program. Permission was obtained from the Darlac Province chief to extend the program to those additional Rhade villages within a radius of ten to fifteen kilometers of Buon Enao. The process that had begun with fifty volunteers from a nearby village brought in for training as a local security or strike force to protect Buon Enao and the immediate area, was easily replicated.

By April 1962 there were 972 trained Village Defenders and a 300-strong Strike Force to defend 40 villages, with a total of 14,000 inhabitants. By October, the whole Buon Enao complex contained about 60,000 people in 200 villages, protected by 10,600 Village Defenders and 1,500 Strike Force personnel; by early 1963, it grew to 214 villages.

With the decision to expand the program, half of a Special Forces A detachment (seven members of Detachment A-35 of the 1st Special Forces Group) with LLDB counterparts comprising detachment commander Captain Khoai, a Jarai, and ten others of lesser rank of Rhade and Jarai ethnicity were brought in to assist in training village defenders and the full-time strike force. The composition of LLDB force at Buon Enao fluctuated from time to time but was always at least 50 percent Montagnard. A program for the training of village medics and others to work in civil affairs projects intended to replace the previously discontinued government programs were also initiated. With the assistance of the U.S. and Vietnamese Special Forces troops who had been introduced in December 1961, and a twelve-man U.S. Special Forces A-detachment deployed in February 1962, all forty villages (including Buon Enao) in the expansion area were incorporated into the program by the middle of April. They began arming the Montagnards with 1903 vintage Springfield rifles, M1 and M2 carbines, Madsen 9mm submachine-guns and some shotguns. About half of the trainees in the Buon Enao project were Rhade, others included Jarai, Mhong and other, smaller groups, such as Nung and Tai Dam in Darlac.

For a few months in 1962 the Buon Enao Project had its own Air Force complements of the USAF's "Farm Gate" program, headquartered at Bien Hoa, involving interdiction bombing and close air support for ground forces. Its aircraft were piston-engine WWII vintage, including C-47 flare-ships and T-28 and B-26 combat aircraft. USAF Air Commandos flew them. In 1962, the Air Commandos were seeking missions and Layton was quick to seize on this opportunity to support the CIDG, especially against communist assaults on defended villages. Initially, it mainly meant the Buon Enao complex and some aircraft were specifically assigned to it. The Air Commandos found this work much to their liking, especially since it involved supporting their Special Forces colleagues, and some pilots bunked in with them.

The Buon Enao complex became a showpiece of the anti-communist war effort in Viet Nam in 1962, and was considered at a very senior level in the US military, and in other circles, to be the most successful counterinsurgency program in Vietnam. Within a little over a year, VC insurgency had been mitigated in Darlac Province. A Bureau for Highlander Affairs was opened in each province in the Central Highlands, and this was foundation for establishing a national Bureau of Highlander Affairs in May 1964 that eventually

became the Ministry for Development of Ethnic Minorities (MDEM) headed by the brilliant Jarai leader, Nay Luette. First referred to as the "Buon Enao Project," it was formally named "The Tribal Area Development Program"; later changed to the "Village Defense Program" (VDP) and finally it morphed into the "Civilian Irregular Defense Group" (CIDG). At the end of 1962, the CIDG program had 24 U.S. Special Forces detachments scattered throughout Vietnam, and those in the Central Highlands were composed mainly of Montagnard forces.

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This article is part of a longer story entitled *Special Forces and the Montagnards* to be published in the Vietnam Veterans for Factual History's book series, *INDOCHINA: In the Year of the* See <https://www.vvfh.org/index.php/books/special-offer> ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael D. Bengé served in the Marine Corps from 1956 to 1959. In 1963, he joined the International Voluntary Services (a forerunner of the Peace Corps), and served in Vietnam, becoming fluent in both Vietnamese and Rhade (the dialect the largest minority group in the Central Highlands). In 1965, he joined the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and served as the Provencal Development Officer in the CORDS program (Civil Operations and Rural Development Support), Ban Me Thuot, Darlac Province in South Viet Nam's Central Highlands.

While serving as the Senior Civilian Advisor in CORDS, Mr. Bengé was captured by the North Vietnamese at Ban Me Thuot during the 1968 TET Offensive as he attempted to rescue American civilians and missionaries in an area that was occupied by a North Vietnamese Battalion. He was held in numerous camps in South Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and North Vietnam for five years. He was released in Hanoi during Operation Homecoming in 1973. In the fall of 1973, Mr. Bengé returned to Vietnam on the request of his friend, MDEM's Minister Nay Luett to develop additional projects for the Montagnards. In mid-1974, he began studies for his Master's Degree in the Philippines; however, he continued to commute to Vietnam to work on projects with MDEM until the communist takeover in April 1975.

Mr. Bengé received several honors for his service in Vietnam. He was awarded three medals from the Government of South Vietnam for his work in civil and political affairs, public health, and ethnic minority affairs. For his efforts in rescuing 11 Americans prior to capture, he received the State Department's highest award for heroism, and a second for valor for actions during captivity. Bengé is a student of Southeast Asia and has some 200 published articles and papers regarding politics and the peoples of the former French Indochina leading up to, during and after the Vietnam War. He is very active in advocating for human rights, religious freedom, and democracy for the peoples of the region.



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The Tali-Banned Cigar Aficionado Club
Camp Morehead, Afghanistan
APO, AE 09354

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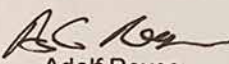
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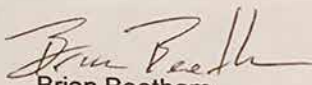
Thank you for your kind donation of cigars, this will enable us to provide level of comfort for our Brave men and women serving here in Afghanistan.

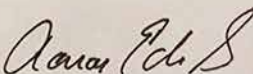
Our "Not for Profit" club meets on Camp Morehead and membership is open to US and Coalition military, State Department and other US Government agencies and Contractors. We feature a single premium hand-made cigar at each meeting. The shape, wrapper, filler and maker are discussed along with the source (we gratefully accept donations as well as purchase cigars for this purpose).

In addition, we conduct a raffle (\$1 per ticket) for donated cigars, humidors and cigar accessories. Further, we send cigars to military and civilian personnel stationed at remote bases so they can enjoy them too.

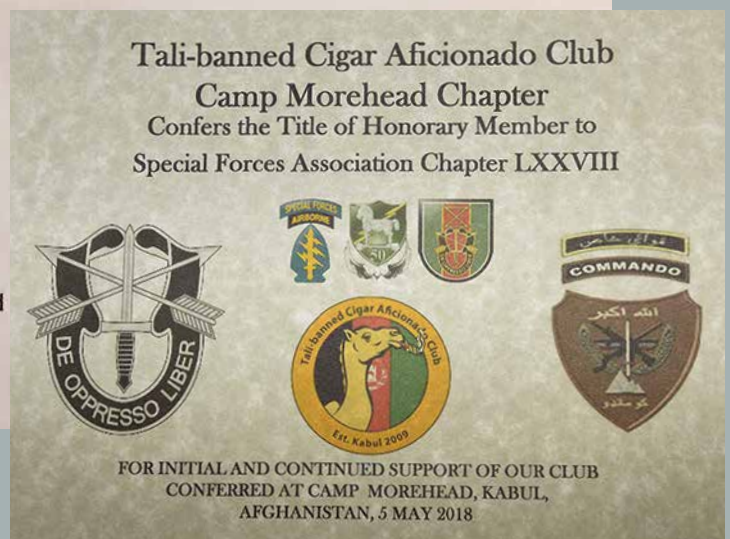
Because the main focus of the club is to enjoy good cigars in the company of good people, we try and feature different brands and styles. This is especially important because the availability of cigars and cigar support accessories, to purchase locally is extremely limited and we feel it is important for our members to enjoy and experience cigars they may not consider on their own. The comfort that this provides to our service members and Military contractors is immeasurable. Your generous contribution will go a long to Improving the time spent here in Afghanistan. Thank you!

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Newman Returns to Laos 4th time for RT Intruder: Still MIA 47 years later

Editor's Note: SFA Executive Director Cliff Newman missed the annual reunion in El Paso earlier in June because he was on a personal mission to return to Southeast Asia to assist DPAA (DoD's Department of Prisoner of War/Missing In Action Accounting Agency) to locate two CCN SOG Recon men and four 101st Airborne airmen who perished in a February 1971 rescue attempt in Laos. Below is a short update from Cliff on his latest trip to Laos. He will write a more detailed story of his third trip to Laos as a citizen dedicated to recovering the remains of fellow SOG recon men. The Sentinel had a brief interview with him after he returned from SEA. In addition, The Sentinel contacted two living SOG legends, Billy Waugh and Sammy Hernandez, for a short updated version of Hernandez' rescue at that time.

On February 18, 1971, two recon teams assigned to SOG base of operations in Da Nang, Command and Control North (CCN), were designated to run a diversionary mission along the A Shau Valley. Their mission was to tie down NVA enemy forces through the use of air strikes while gathering any military intelligence possible from enemy soldiers, local Laotians pressed into service with the NVA, or through wiretaps.

Because of the dangerous nature of this mission, two additional Green Berets were assigned to RT Intruder: SFC Sammy Hernandez and SFC Charles "Wes" Wesley. The team leader was Capt. Ronald L. "Doc" Watson, the assistant team leader was Sgt. Allen R. "Baby Jesus" Lloyd, and Sgt. Raymond L. "Robby" Robinson was the radio operator. RT Python, with team leader Capt. Jim Butler, was inserted on the eastern side of the A Shau Valley.

Laos is a dramatically different country today than it was 47 years ago when recon teams were running clandestine, top-secret missions there across the fence during the secret war that was fought for 8 years under the aegis of the Military Assistance Command Vietnam – Studies and Observations Group, or simply SOG. In particular, the A Shau Valley—which now has at least one hotel near the A Loui airstrip—was a hotbed of communist enemy activity throughout the Vietnam War.

In the early days of the Vietnam War, three Green Beret A-camps were driven from the A Shau Valley between 1965 and '66. Although communists in North Vietnam had signed a treaty in 1961 agreeing not to station or train soldiers in Laos and Cambodia, by 1971 there were more than 60,000 communist soldiers and couriers in Laos alone. The A Shau Valley bristled with NVA armaments, food supplies and equipment delivered to North Vietnam by Russia, China and other Eastern Bloc countries.

At that time, captured enemy documents revealed that the communist North Vietnamese Army (NVA) placed nearly a dozen counter-



SFA Executive Director Cliff Newman is standing at the border marker separating Laos from Vietnam. Cliff, who served two tours of duty at CCN running recon, returned to Southeast Asia for the third time in support of the DPAA attempting to locate the remains of four aviators and two CCN recon men from RT Intruder who died in a helicopter crash during an extraction from Laos in 1971. (Photo Credit: Cliff Newman)

recon companies in that valley to reinforce LZ (landing zone) watchers and to force locals to work with the communist soldiers. In addition, enemy estimates of troop strength in the A Shau Valley listed several infantry battalions as resting and training there. The communists also moved at least two anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) battalions to defend the valley.

Both teams were inserted without incident. RT Intruder, with five Green Berets and five Bru Montagnard team members, moved off the LZ in search of a trail that was near a ridgeline. After moving for a short while, with NVA trackers moving behind them firing signal shots into the air, RT Intruder came across a large trail, crossed it, set up a team security perimeter, and took note of about a dozen separate communications lines lying on the wide trail.

As the team worked with the forward air controller—codenamed Covey—to determine if it was on the correct hill, five enemy soldiers moved down the trail hunting for the team. After a brief fire-fight, which killed the five NVA soldiers, team leader (One-Zero) Capt. Watson called for an extraction because the team had been compromised. Wesley and Hernandez had also recovered several NVA documents, medals, clothing, and a communist flag from the dead soldiers. They stuffed the spoils of war into a rucksack.

As the team waited for helicopters from Company A (the Comancheros) of the 101st Aviation Battalion, 101st Airborne Division of Camp Eagle, Phu Bai, bad weather started to close in

on the ridgeline and the team's LZ. The first chopper started to lift Wesley, Robinson, and two Bru team members out of the LZ when it began to lose power. The four men jumped from the ladder they had started to climb, landing on the dead NVA soldiers they had killed a few minutes earlier.

The helicopter crew had to cut loose the ladder. Because the mountainous air was thin, a second chopper had a difficult time lifting off of the ridgeline, actually dragging the four team members through the jungle before clearing the target area. A third chopper lifted out the three remaining Bru team members, carrying no more men due to weather and thin air conditions resulting from the height of the mountains. All three helicopters received heavy enemy ground fire.

As darkness closed in, CWO2 George P. Berg returned to the LZ to pick up the three remaining Green Berets. Helicopter crew chief Spec. 4 Walter Demsey and door gunner Gary L. Johnson lowered three STABO extraction harness rigs attached to ropes that were more than 100 feet long, to the trio of soldiers on the ground. (STABO harness rigs were designed by Special Forces during the war for extraction from the jungle when no landing zones were available. In the event a soldier was shot or knocked unconscious, the STABO rigs were designed to keep a soldier connected to the extraction rope.)

They hooked into the STABO rigs as Doc Watson gave the chopper crew the signal to lift out of the LZ. Berg began moving off of the LZ when NVA gunfire slammed into the aircraft. Demsey and Johnson returned furious gunfire from their M-60 machine guns. Hernandez was lifted to approximately 30-40 feet off the ground when his STABO rig snagged on a tree branch, snapping the rope that held him. The Green Beret fell to the ground, knocked unconscious.

He didn't hear NVA AAA fire slam into the Huey, literally knocking it out of the sky. The ill-fated helicopter traveled approximately 600 feet before it made an ugly U-turn and flipped over, crashing into the side of a granite-faced mountain, bursting into flames while also slamming Doc Watson and Baby Jesus Lloyd into the side of the cliff, killing them instantly.

Miraculously, Sammy Hernandez survived the fall. When he regained consciousness, he heard NVA soldiers and trackers searching for the men of RT Intruder. The stealthy jungle fighter moved silently into thick vegetation and hid for what would be a long night. When darkness fell, Hernandez emerged briefly from his hiding place, to slam his dislocated left shoulder into a tree in order to pop the shoulder bone back into the joint. Many years later, Hernandez simply said, "that really hurt. Believe me, I saw stars." With his shoulder sore, but no longer dislocated, Hernandez crawled back into his jungle hideaway.

The crash site of RT Intruder

On February 19, RT Habu, led by one-zero SSG Danzer, was inserted into the target to recover the dead bodies—presuming that Hernandez was KIA. Other Green Berets on that mission included Cliff Newman; SSG James Woodham, a medic; SFC Jimmy Horton; Sgt. Lemuel McGlothren; and SFC Charles Wesley, who had been lifted out of the target the previous day. Wesley volunteered for the mission and put one of the six body bags and extra ammo in his rucksack.

The expanded RT Habu was running a Bright Light mission—the most deadly of all SOG assignments because the NVA knew the Green Berets, in coordination with air assets from the Air Force, Marine Corps, and Army, would be willing to die in an effort to recover Americans killed in action. When recon teams ran Bright Light missions, they carried no food, minimal water, extra ammo, hand grenades, body bags, bandages, and emergency medical supplies.

Shortly after RT Habu was inserted, a chase helicopter with Green Beret SGM Billy Waugh aboard spotted an American in an open area, flashing a bright-colored panel. It was Hernandez, who had crawled silently out of thicket to the open area and signaled the helicopter crew and Waugh. Hernandez told the *Sentinel*, "When I first saw Billy Waugh hanging from that Huey, pointing to me to get on the rope, I called him on the radio and told him, 'Do you remember what happened yesterday?! I don't want to get on any stinking rope' I told Billy that. Then he became irate with me and told me to shut up and hook up to the rope or hitch hike to CCN."

Waugh, the 88-year-old SOG legend was interviewed in early June in between classes that he was teaching on unconventional warfare at Ft. Bragg. Told about Hernandez's remarks, Waugh said, "He's right. You can bet your sweet ass I was irate with him. Real irate! At first, we didn't know that Sammy had lived through that horrific crash. It was tragic beyond belief. At first, I was real happy to see Sammy and when he started giving me grief about getting pulled out on the rope, I told him in now uncertain terms to hook up and shut up. Eventually he saw it my way. He hooked up and we lifted him out of that hell hole and flew him back to Phu Bai. Hell



Near the top of that distant mountain peak in Laos is the crash site where members of RT Intruder perished in 1971. This photo, taken in 2015 from an LZ, shows how far away the crash site was from the location of this photo. DPAA officials were unable to get closer to the crash site when this photo was taken. Efforts continue with Laotian officials to have an LZ closer to the crash site where six Americans from that mission died in one helicopter crash, and two others died one day later helping a SOG recon team locate the RT Intruder crash site. Newman was a member of that recovery team, RT Habu for that mission. He knew all of the Green Berets killed at both crash sites. (Photo courtesy of Cliff Newman)

we couldn't have landed a helicopter anywhere near him due to the hazardous nature of the terrain and jungle....Sammy, who was one helluva recon man, was real lucky that day."

Meanwhile, on the ground back at the target area, Covey—a Cessna O-2A, twin engine, light observation plane flown by Air Force 1st Lt. James (Woodstock) Hull with veteran recon man SFC Jose Fernandez flying in the right seat as Covey rider—located the crash site and directed RT Habu toward it, which was no easy task due to the thick jungle vegetation. For Fernandez, this was his second flight as a Covey rider after running recon for several years. Several times Hull flew the O-2A low, near tree-top level, to spot the team so Fernandez could provide it with accurate information as it moved through the thick jungle toward the crash site.

As they vectored the team to the end of the cliff several hundred feet above the crash site, the O-2A was hit with heavy enemy gunfire. It crashed a few miles away, killing both Hull and Fernandez, which added another layer of grief to a Bright Light mission attempting to recover six dead Americans.

Thanks to Hull and Fernandez though, RT Intruder located the crash site. They had to rappel down the cliff to reach the final resting spot of the destroyed helicopter and the six dead Americans. Eventually, the team placed the bodies of Berg, Woods, Johnson, and one leg—which they assumed was Demsey's, as the rest of Demsey's body couldn't be located – into body bags. These four body bags were stacked near the helicopter's frame to be lifted out by helicopter hoist in the morning.

Another grisly discovery was that of the bodies of Watson and Lloyd, hanging from trees on the cliff's face, still attached to their STABO rigs. Danzer determined that because night was falling, RT Habu should try to retrieve the bodies of the two recon men in the morning. The men of RT Habu hunkered into their RON for the night. They hoped that having the body bags next to the crash site, would improve the odds of being able to successfully remove them in the morning after retrieving the bodies of Watson and Lloyd.

However, in the morning, the NVA fiercely attacked RT Habu, wounding several team members. In order to survive, RT Habu reluctantly left behind the body bags, as it maneuvered away from the RON to get to a more advantageous position in the jungle to combat enemy troops while searching for an LZ and attending to wounded team members.

Meanwhile, a few miles away, Capt. Fred "Lightning" Wunderlich and three men from his recon team rappelled from a CH-53 helicopter onto the crashed O-2A. They confirmed that Hull and Fernandez were dead. That small Bright Light team recovered Fernandez' body from the wreckage, but team members couldn't recover Hull because the front engine of the O-2A had pinned him into the aircraft making it impossible to recover his body from it.

Across the A Shau Valley, Capt. Jim Butler and RT Python had been embroiled in intense combat with other NVA units, in fighting so intense that assistant team leader SSG Les Chapman fought hand-to-hand with NVA soldiers at one point during that team's battle. Butler had used Stinger and Spectre gunships, F-4 Phantom

jets, A-1 Skyraiders, and numerous helicopter gunships from several helicopter units assigned to support SOG missions during that team's time on the ground. At one point, when team members from RT Habu and RT Python were fighting for their collective lives, Covey made radio contact with Butler, offering to pull RT Python out first due to the intense nature and the ferocity of the NVA attack on that team. Butler declined, he told Covey to pick up RT Habu first.

By the end of February 20th, an Air Force CH-53 pulled out RT Habu, flew the team—most of whom were wounded—back to a field hospital, then turned around and returned to the A Shau Valley to rescue RT Python, which suffered at least one KIA and several WIAs.

Still MIA

Today, those six Americans from RT Intruder and the four 101st Airborne aviators are among the 1,597 service members and civilians who are still listed as missing in action from the Vietnam War. They are among the more than 83,000 U.S. service members who remain missing in action today collectively from WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. People familiar with this overall POW/MIA mission concede that approximately 51,000 of those service members are listed as missing over deep ocean water—both Navy personnel and Air Force aviators, and will never be able to be recovered.

Under the new consolidation plan, DPAA brought three previous federal operations together under one command: the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO), the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), and the Air Force's Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio. On June 19, 2015 then-Secretary of Defense Ash Carter announced the Department of Defense Executive Service appointment of recently retired LTG Michael S. Linnington as director of the DPAA. However, he resigned in June 2016. Fortunately, retired Air Force Maj. Gen. Kelly K. McKeague was appointed as the new DPAA director on Sept. 5, and has stressed the crucial need to continue to all efforts in SEA to return the remains of Americans lost in the Vietnam War and still remain missing.

Of special concern to Green Berets like Cliff Newman—who located the fallen Americans from RT Intruder 47 years ago but was unable to recover their bodies due to intense enemy gunfire—are the remains of 50 Green Berets and approximately 250 airmen who were lost in Laos during the eight-year secret war in Vietnam and are listed as missing in action, as the highly acidic soil of Southeast Asia attacks their remains.

In 2003, Newman, Wesley, and McGlothren returned to Southeast Asia to work with the Joint Task Force for Full Accounting in an attempt to locate the six Americans. That mission ended without locating them. Newman returned with a dedicated, hard-working DPAA recovery team in June 2015. However, that effort, too, failed to pinpoint the location of the six Americans' remains because there was confusion about where the LZ should be cut for the DPAA team to use in 2015. As a result, where they landed was too far away to travel through dense Vietnam/Laotian jungle. However, he did praise the DPAA team he worked with in the field. "All I can say is, I'll gladly go back to help find them, that's the least I can do,"

Newman said. “However, I’m not getting any younger.” That case number is 1706, and as of June 2017, there will be no DPAA in the field on that case until 2018.

Thus – counting the Brightlight mission that Newman served valiantly on Feb. 19, 1971, he has personally returned to Laos four times in effort to bring them home. Interviewed briefly from his office in SFA Headquarters in Fayetteville, N.C. He agreed to talk to the *Sentinel* briefly while he worked on a longer story for the SFA’s Drop magazine. Newman praised the work of all DPAA staff working on this project, title simply Case 1706. The indigenous team members also did good work, hacking an LZ on top of the mountain not far from where RT Intruder disappeared 47 years ago.”I recognized the area almost immediately,” Newman said. “...It was confirmed by various methods that we were within six meters of the crash site....They found quite a

lot of shell fragments, undoubtedly from the Cobras, Spads and fast movers that worked that area in support of the team in 1971.”

Newman feels that this fourth trip to Laos, provided facts and details that will enable the DPAA site team to conduct a “thorough excavation and investigation in that area” that will finally yield the remains of the six Army warriors lost during America’s deadly secret war in SEA.

One positive note: Hull’s remains were recovered and a formal burial service was held for him in Arlington National Cemetery in 2006. ❖

Editor’s Second Note: As of June 25, 2017, there were still 50 Green Berets listed as MIA in Laos alone, along with at least 105 aviators who died supporting SOG missions. The men of RT Intruder and the aviators are among that total of approximately 260 aviators missing in Laos as of this printing.

Col Stephen Edward Cavanaugh Jr. , Chief, MACV-SOG, Dies at 96

COL Stephen E. Cavanaugh, 30 year US Army veteran, passed away March 24, 2018 in Riverside, California. He was born August 8, 1921 in San Diego, California, the only child of Stephen E. Cavanaugh and Pauline E. (Meyers). In 1943 he married the love of his life, Blanche Eleanor Young, who preceded him death on October 26, 2016. They had one son, James Cavanaugh of Honolulu, Hawaii. Steve and Blanche are buried at Riverside National Cemetery, section 55A, site 3729.

Steve graduated from Los Angeles High School and went to UCLA, entering the engineering program, where he met his future wife, Blanche and became friends with fellow Bruin Jack Singlaub. “Steve was a star athlete at UCLA, while I became quite familiar with other men on the team who, like me, sat on the bench, watching him and our fellow teammates on the field,” Singlaub said. Cavanaugh’s education was interrupted when he was commissioned in May 1942 as a Second Lieutenant from the ROTC Program in UCLA. He was in the artillery program at the University so he was commissioned in Ordnance and was ordered to active duty as an Ordnance Officer. In a 2007 interview, COL Cavanaugh said “I did not want to spend my life loading ammunition onto trucks so I volunteered for the parachute troops in 1942. I went to parachute school and graduated in November 1942 and ended up assigned to a newly activated Parachute Regiment in Fort Benning, Georgia. The 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment which became the parachute regiment of the 11th Airborne Division. We subsequently moved to Toccoa, Georgia for training, then on to Camp Mackall, North Carolina.



Steve Cavanaugh — early Army days.

While at Camp Mackall, he wrote Blanche and told her he’d like to marry her. He flew back to Los Angeles and they were married in September 5, 1943. She was with him from then on, except when he went overseas during World War II.

After his training at Camp Mackall, he deployed overseas to the Pacific Theatre, and spent WWII with 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment ending up as a Company Commander. During that time, he had two combat jumps with 11th Abn. Div., fighting the Japanese in New Guinea and the Philippines. His second jump was on a North

Luzon drop zone to link up with friendly guerrillas.

He came back to Fort Benning; then he was Instructor at the Parachute school, then to Berlin as staff secretary for three years to Gen. Maxwell Taylor.

He then had a tour in Taiwan, followed by Command & General Staff College (CGSC) & the Army War College; followed by another tour in Taiwan and a MAAG tour in Vietnam in 1961 where he served as the country’s senior training officer. In 1962, Cavanaugh came back as Commander (CO) of the Combat Developments Command’s Special Warfare Agency at Ft. Bragg, and then was CO of 10th SF Gp in Europe. In 1968 COL Cavanaugh returned to Vietnam and for two years was commander of all SOG missions in Vietnam, one of five men to hold that position during SOG’s history. Cavanaugh returned to a command position at Ft. Ord, CA, where he served until 1972, retiring after 30 years of service to our country. ❖

COPS CORNER



Gary Macnamara

The Many Roads to My Career in Law Enforcement

By Gary Macnamara

Unlike many in the police profession I had no relatives in the police service. My father was an attorney and I remember a visit to our local police precinct where he introduced me to a detective. I never had any other contacts with any policemen in New York.

My main career goal was to become a military officer. I went to a military High School, Xavier High School, established in 1847. My instructors were veterans of World War II and the Korean War. I applied to both the Naval Academy and West Point. I did not get an appointment so obtained my commission through the Reserve



Officer Training Program (ROTC). I finished my education and was commissioned in September 1965. Two weeks later I was in Airborne School and three months later I was a platoon leader with the 82nd Airborne in the Dominican Republic. After my return to Fort Bragg in 1966, I was reassigned to the Third Brigade. In 1968, when President Johnson alerted the 82nd Airborne Division to deploy to Vietnam I was the S-3 Air for the 2nd Bn 505th PIR. I had to redo the load plans but literally wrote the load tables that sent my Bn. to Vietnam. I became part of the out-loading team for the rest of the Brigade and received orders for Vietnam six months later.

When I returned from Vietnam, I was assigned to a Special Processing Detachment at Fort Dix, New Jersey. This unit was unlike the vast majority of units in the Army. It would receive deserters and those dropped from the rolls (DFR), who were on orders to Vietnam. Our area covered New York, New Jersey and Fairfield County Connecticut. Many of our soldiers were housed in the Fort Dix stockade; however, many other were housed in two companies in our area. We received from 400-800 personnel a month for processing. During the summer months our numbers were lower. During the six months I was assigned to this unit, we had six soldiers die from heroin overdoses. I wanted to do something about this problem and applied for the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (BNDD) which later became the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Unfortunately I could not qualify because of eye sight.

About 18 months later I saw an advertisement for the Los Angeles Police Department in the local paper. I applied twice and was successful on my second endeavor. Los Angeles relaxed their eye sight requirement for 18 months, but they had a height requirement. I was measured three different times and qualified for admission to the Police Academy. On the third day of training I was selected as the class Drill Instructor. Most of my class members were Vietnam veterans. Of the 54 members who started our class only 37 graduated.

Ironically I never worked narcotics enforcement directly. Based on my education I was assigned in my third year with the Department to a Traffic Legislative and Special Projects unit. In other words I wrote traffic law and traffic safety grant applications. A friend, Dick Studdard, a Department Motor Sergeant, had a problem with DUI enforcement, where there was alcohol and other drugs involved. The medical doctors did not want to go to court

Left, Gary Macnamara during his Army days
Right, LAPD Lieutenant Macnamra

Cops Corner will continue to carry stories related to or about law enforcement. Anyone interested in publishing a story about their experiences is encouraged to contact Chapter 78 Vice President Brad Welker at wbwelker@gmail.com.

to testify. Dick teamed up with a Narcotics Detective named Lynn Leeds and they researched the issue and came up with a training program, which relied heavily on eye movement and other observable physical factors. It took two years but I was finally able to get a grant from the California State Office of Traffic Safety. The training was very successful and was replicated throughout the State of California. It has now spread throughout the United States through the National Traffic Highway System (NHTSA) and is still in use today.

Life as a Policeman, (Yes, my badge said Policeman) was not as portrayed on the police shows of the era. We had no individual radios. The radio was in the car. We had no Taser or Mace. We had a straight stick or baton, a revolver with 18 rounds and two sets of handcuffs and we were expected to enforce the laws of the State of California and the City of Los Angeles. As a “beat officer” I encountered narcotics users and would work the problem areas.

I had a brief stint as a detective, but returned to patrol one year later as a field sergeant. Prior to the 1984 Olympic Games I was selected as the Training Coordinator and Olympic Assignment Coordinator. We conducted three days of live fire training and I had over 261 assignments for our station personnel. The Olympics were definitely a challenge

I had over 20 years as a field sergeant and my assignment areas were generally poor or low income with numerous street gangs, many of whom traced their roots back to the “pachucos” or World War II gangs. Names like “White Fence”, “Clover”, “Quatro Flats” and “Primero Flats” were all familiar to me.

As a Watch Commander, it was sometimes difficult to establish that there were members of these gangs who were relatively young but would not hesitate to shoot or kill a policeman. I would emphasize that the gangs have a different culture and different attitudes. One does not have to agree with these attitudes but recognize that there is a motivation to hurt members of law enforcement. On a radio call it was not uncommon to see a five-year old boy already sporting gang colors. I had a couple of very close calls, but was never injured.

During the 1992 riots, I was a squad leader in Hollenbeck Area, east of downtown Los Angeles. I had a couple of tours in the main riot area in Southwest Area, but spent most of my riot-related assignments in Hollenbeck. I organized my squad into two teams and put a second sergeant in charge of the second team. We had two vehicles and rode five deep. Based upon previous experience I had a fire extinguisher, extra ammunition, binoculars and later acquired a Marine reservist who was a medic. We did not have a serious riot and looting problem experienced by the rest of the City, but we did have a few incidents of looting. One citizen reported to us that looters were stealing beer from the Tianguis Market at Fourth Street



Class 1-73 Morning Formation

and Soto Streets. We went in pursuit and an individual; in the back of the pick-up truck starting throwing cans of beer at our black and white vehicle. The car was covered in beer. The helicopter helped guide us and we apprehended four suspects in Monterey Park. The individual in the back of the truck fell out and sustained a head wound so my medic got a chance to “rip some bandages.”

I wish I could say that all my experiences were pleasant, but there are some memories I will take to the grave. Around Christmas time, I had a Christmas tree fire at an apartment in the “five points” section of North Broadway. The fire was started by a five year old boy who had been playing with the Christmas tree lights. The boy was able to escape the fire but his infant brother in the crib did not. I ordered the officers out of the room and waited for detectives to arrive. There were the traffic victims who sustained massive head injuries on impact and covered the inside of the vehicle in blood. There was the fire in a board and care home that left patients burned to death in their beds.

There is one incident that haunts me to this very day. As a Lieutenant, Watch Commander, in Newton Area, I pleaded with my Captain to request more officers for our early day watch. Often we would have only three or four units assigned and often one or two of them would have court. When this occurred, I would get out from behind my desk and get into a black and white vehicle, for often I was their only back-up. To complicate matters we would often get calls into adjacent areas. I even went to the Bureau Chief to try and get some relief.

On a Friday morning February 20, 2004, my worst fears were realized. One of my units had gotten a call into Southwest Area to “Meet the victim of a domestic violence”. The call was so low grade that it was not voiced over the radio but sent on the mobile digital terminal (MDT). Ricardo Lizarraga and his partner, Joel Ruiz, responded and met the victim. She asked the officer to accom-

Continued on page 12

RELENTLESS STRIKE: The Secret History of Joint Special Operations Command by Sean Naylor



Kenn Miller

By Kenn Miller

Sometimes a long book densely packed with previously hidden history, anecdotes, incidents, exciting combat narrative, murky bureaucratic struggles, innumerable military acronyms, an extremely comprehensive index and bibliography, and the highs and lows of human actions under great stress is best served by a short review. And that's what I'm giving Sean Naylor's *Relentless Strike*—a fairly short review of a very long book.

Sean Naylor is a former *Army Times* reporter, war correspondent, and author of the excellent 2004 book *Not A Good Day To Die: The Untold Story of Operation Anaconda*, and when he set out to write a history of JSOC, he surely must've known that he was taking on a vast and difficult job, but I doubt he knew just how vast and difficult the job would turn out to be.

Relentless Strike is one helluva excellent book, and any reader of the *Sentinel* should buy a copy, read it, and keep it to reread certain parts over and over again. I read this long book three times in preparing this review, and each time I found new points of interest, learned new things, and improved my understanding of the contents each time.

JSOC is a large and varied organization and even readers who are experienced veterans of our special operations forces will often find themselves at least surprised by the actions and capabilities



RELENTLESS STRIKE: The Secret History of Joint Special Operations Command

By Sean Naylor

St. Martins Press, 2015, 540 pages
(including index)

of the component units permanently or temporarily under JSOC. I was particularly proud to learn how the 75th Ranger Regiment has evolved and expanded its roles and capabilities over the last fifteen years or so, and I found myself fascinated by the unconventional creativity of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment. Some *Sentinel* readers may be a bit disappointed that the training and operational activities of the mainstream, non-JSOC, SF teams is not given quite as much attention as they deserve. But there is so much in this book, that is likely to be minor annoyance at most.

There is a lot in this book, and that worries me. JSOC's activities are so secretive and its missions so sensitive and dangerous, that any publicity can be compromising and deadly. *Relentless Strike* is a book that all who are or have been involved in American military special operations should read and will enjoy reading. But there is just too much in this book, I wish its readership could be limited only to those on our side—and that our enemies, our rivals, and those wannabe “black ops” fantasy islanders who never served in our military could be kept in the dark and never know this splendid history exists. ♦

Cops Corner continued

pany her back to her apartment. When the victim and the officer entered, the suspect fired striking Officer Lizarraga in the abdomen, below his vest. Lizarraga told Ruiz to get the victim out of the line of fire. Officer Lizarraga was transported to a local hospital where he died from his wounds approximately 2 hours later. The suspect was arrested about 3 hours after the shooting during a large manhunt. The shooter was a gang member who was on parole and had a long criminal history.

Right after this tragic shooting, I sat Ruiz next to me and explained repeatedly, that it was not his fault. I was very familiar with “survivor guilt.” A year later a Review Board wanted to take administrative disapproval against Joel Ruiz for tactics. Assistant Chief James Mc Donnell stepped up and no action was taken against Ruiz.

The following week, after the initial shooting, I brought up the issue of “crossover into adjacent areas” to then Chief Bratton at a union delegates meeting. He said he would look into it. The following

week I was reassigned to Northeast Area, where I finished my 35 year career as a Lieutenant I. When I was reassigned, my career and any hope of further advancement was over. There are certain times when you play “You bet your bars.” Do I have any regrets? No! I worked with some of the best policemen and women in the world. Yes we had a few runts in the litter, but they were very few.

It pains me now to see some of the videos which cast law enforcement in a bad light. Physical violence is never pretty, but when you engage a suspect at close quarters, there is always a gun involved, namely the officer's. I would ask my officers, “Can you afford to be wrong?” If the answer was “No.” they knew what they had to do.

Some folks have to ask, “Did I make a difference?” I don't have to ask that question because I know I did. If I made any mistakes along the way, that will be between me and my Maker. I always tried to do my best. ♦

Letters to the Editor

From Paul Longgear on the *Sentinel*!!!

You guys need to run a 1-0 School for SFA newsletter editors. The *Sentinel* is top shelf. Thanks for all you do.

Paul Longgear

Tailwind Day Update

Thanks so much for publishing this wonderful article about our latest event. I often ask myself why I keep doing these types of events when I truly full well know the answer. Linda and I put a lot into this one and they cannot miss with the variety of fighters present and the atmosphere provided by the Meltons. As is always the case, Linda and I really do not get to “attend” these events because they require a lot of work before, during, and after. I really appreciate Doc (John Padgett) attending and writing this. We hardly got to speak with him as it were. For many more excellent photos of the event please review this link courtesy of RBA Marketing and Media... <https://www.flickr.com/photos/148913044@N07/albums/72157693350325962>

The name was conceived long before the event because the Meltons were hopeful to once again get many of the Tailwind Team to attend and this time have Gary Mike Rose, as well. Basically, Doc ended up being the sole actual Tailwind participant for many reasons. We should have anticipated the burnout that those men had after the MOH activities and had no way of knowing that Gene McCarley would be facing all his challenges. Without Gene attending we were never going to get close to replicating the first Tailwind Day.

Regarding that day and Operation Tailwind, if you have not seen the following, I would suggest you at least skim it...

Tailwind Day

LAST MINUTE UPDATE... After receiving approval of the above paragraph from Gene McCarley, I received a timely email from Rich Benjamin. Rich is the owner of RBA Marketing in Sevierville, TN, and they do the Tennessee Museum of Aviation website. Since Warbird Digest Editor Greg Morehead got stuck in Chino this year, he was not able to make our event. Rich then filled in to do the video of our panel discussion with new equipment. Better yet, he thoroughly enjoyed the dual role of guest and videographer.

His work is available for you to enjoy and share as follows:

<https://vimeo.com/166371295>

For me the highlight is this minute — 150:40 – 151:40

When I asked Rich for permission to send this link, I received this response...

“It is there for you and your brothers... Feel free to share with any and all. This was our first documentary endeavor. We had a blast working on this project, so glad we were able to capture this event for history sake.”

The possibility of not drawing many of the Tailwind Team is why we chose to call the event Tailwind Day Redux “Plus”. The plus saved the event and likely made it even better due to a set of new exchanges and the time considerations. Tilt did do a great job of giving Operation Tailwind its due and promoting his excellent book.

Regards,
Don Engebretsen

From SFA Chapter 78 President

Gentlemen,

For the first time in SFA history, during the SFA reunion in El Paso, there were three newsletter awards passed out.

In the past there were only two.

This year, the SFA BOD formed a new category of newsletter awards: “Cross Arrows For Excellence In Newsletters.”

Thanks to the skill, dedication, and relentless pursuit of excellence by Editor Lonny Holmes, the *Sentinel* earned that first award — see photo below.

Thank you Lonny and thanks to all of our SF writers and contributors, and layout/design editor Debra Holm.

Salute.
J. Meyer

p.s.: I shipped more than 50 *Sentinels* to El Paso for the reunion. They evaporated as soon as they were placed on the theatre table— none were left behind littering the theatre or hospitality suite, none were in the trash. They were simply consumed by SF men from other chapters.

You did it again Lonny



SFA Chapter 78 June 2018 Meeting



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- 1 Chapter 78 President John Stryker Meyer.
- 2 Brad Welker speaking on California law changes.
- 3 Len Fine, displaying an auction item, with John Meyer and Ed Barrett.
- 4 John and Tom Turney, SF Brothers.
- 5 Alfred C. Serrato, commander for the state of California of the Combat Infantrymen's Association was the invited Speaker
- 6 Continuing the chapter meeting out in front of the hotel. Some

members don't want to leave! Back row: Brad Welker, Mike Keele, LTC (R) Dave Thomas. Front row: John S. Meyer & Len Fine.

- 7 Jim Duffy discussing pistol shooting.
- 8 Mark Miller's new "Bomber Jacket" designed by LTC (R) Dave Thomas owner of specialforces.com with SF logos and Mark's name and SF Chapter 78 on the front.
- 9 SFA C-78 members listening to Brad Welker's lecture on California law changes.